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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/572,548	03/17/2006	Yo Yamato	3273-0221PUS1	7436
2292 7590 08/26/2009 BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH PO BOX 747 FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747				
EXAMINER				
CHANG, VICTOR S				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1794				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
08/26/2009		ELECTRONIC		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

mailroom@bskb.com

# Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/572,548

**Applicant(s)**

YAMATO ET AL.

**Examiner**

VICTOR S. CHANG

**Art Unit**

1794

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 June 2009 and 11 August 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 5-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 5 and 6 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 7-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/808)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 6/11/09
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Introduction***

1. Applicants' amendments/remarks and interview summary filed on 6/11/2009 and 8/11/2009 have been entered. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended. Claims 1-3 and 7-10 are active.
2. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
3. Rejections not maintained are withdrawn.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

4. Claims 1-3 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

While the intended scope of the coating as a nonporous material over the surface of the porous structure of film base was conveyed by an illustration during the interview on 6/11/2009, the examiner recommends applicants amend the recitation in claim 1 lines 12-13 from "coating the porous film base is not porous" to "forming a thin solid layer over cell wall surfaces throughout the porous structure of the film base", or alternate better clarifying language. It should be noted that since the topology of the coating duplicates the microporous structure of the porous film base, it is improper to describe the coating as "not porous".

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(c) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 1-3 and 7-10 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Zhang et al. [US 20040086782].

Zhang's invention relates to a battery separator (cell separator). The battery separator is a thermoplastic microporous membrane. Useful thermoplastics include polyvinyl chlorides, nylons, fluorocarbons, polyolefins, polyesters, etc. [0010]. The membrane is made by phase inversion (conversion) process [0012].

For claims 1-3, Zhang's separator has inherently multiplicity of communicating micropores as required ion passages for battery function. The separator is necessarily chemical resistant to the battery electrolyte. The phase inversion manufacturing process inherently converts a solidifying polymer solution into a microporous membrane. Absence any composition limitation to the film base, Zhang's membrane of a single polymer, e.g., polyester, reads on both the film base and the solid coating layer over the cell walls throughout the porous film base. Zhang is silent about porosity, average pore size, and thickness of the membrane. However, since Zhang teaches essentially the same microporous structure/composition made by the same phase inversion process as the claimed invention, workable pore size, porosity and thickness are deemed to be either anticipated, or obvious routine optimizations, dictated by the

same end use. Finally, regarding the method of coating and drying, since the process limitation has not been shown on the record to produce a patentably distinct article, the formed articles are rendered *prima facie* obvious, and this limitation at the present time has not been given patentable weight.

For claims 7, 9 and 10, for the same reasons set forth above, the water permeation rate is also deemed to be an obvious routine optimization. Regarding the amount of the coating weight, Zhang's single polymer membrane encompasses the coating weight as claimed.

For claim 8, again, the process limitation at the present time has not been given patentable weight.

### ***Conclusion***

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to VICTOR S. CHANG whose telephone number is (571)272-1474. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:00 am - 5:00 pm, Tuesday - Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Sample can be reached on 571-272-1376. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Victor S Chang/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1794